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ABSTRACT

This curriculum unit introduces intermediate grade and middle school students to the work of Stephen Sondheim, one of the most talented composers of the contemporary American musical theater, and teaches them about the process of writing an original musical. The unit notes that in his musical "Into the Woods" Sondheim incorporates (and distorts) elements of traditional fairy tales to create a lively and unique piece of theater. In the unit, students will create the libretto and script for an original musical based on the Grimm Brothers' fairy tale, "The Frog Prince." The unit's lesson--Sondheim's "Into the Woods": Fairy Tale Tunes--takes only two days to complete. Its classroom activities focus on improvisational techniques and small-group work. The unit provides a step-by-step detailed instructional plan for the teacher. (NKA)

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ED 477 984

The Kennedy Center ARTSEDGE WORLDCOM

Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Curriculum Unit Detail

Sondheim's Into the Woods

This unit introduces students to the work of Stephen Sondheim, one of the most celebrated composers of the American musical theatre, and teaches them about the process of writing an original musical.

In his musical *Into the Woods*, Sondheim incorporates (and distorts) elements of traditional fairy tales to create a lively and unique piece of theatre. In this unit, students will create the libretto and script for an original musical based on The Grimm Brothers' fairy tale, *The Frog Prince*. Classroom activities focus on improvisational techniques and small-group work.

The following lessons are part of this unit:

- Sondheim's Into the Woods: Fairy Tale Tunes

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CS 511 366

The Kennedy Center ARTSEDGE WORLDCOM

Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Sondheim's Into the Woods: Fairy Tale Tunes
(Part of Curriculum Unit Sondheim's Into the Woods)

Resource Type: lesson

Length: 2 days

Grade: 4,5,6,7,8

Subjects: Language Arts, Performing Arts

Subtopics: Literature, Music, Theater

Intelligences Being Addressed:

- Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Logical/Mathematical Intelligence
- Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
- Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:

- Acquisition and integration of knowledge
- Attitudes and perceptions about learning
- Extension and refinement of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge
- Productive habits of the mind

Overview: In the musical, *Into the Woods, Jr.*, Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine have combined several familiar fairy tale characters and their stories. In the lesson, Fairy Tale Variations, the students created the "book" for *The Frog Prince* by the Brothers Grimm and Jon Scieszka's fractured tale, *The Frog Prince Continued*. They will now create the music for a mini-musical of their stories. In groups, the students improvise musical scenes from *The Frog Prince* and *The Frog Prince Continued* using the "book" already created and a variety of musical improv games. Using the opening number of *Into the Woods* as a model, the class will combine all of their pieces to create a mini-musical. The final product will be presented to the class and on audio and video tapes. This is the second lesson in a two-part unit.

Equipment:

- Audio Recorder: Tape recoder and audio tape
- Computer: PC or Mac, with Internet access and printer
- Sound System: CD player (optional)
- Video Camera

Media & Materials:

- Book: See "Other Materials" section,
- Recording: See "Other Materials" section,

Printouts: This lesson does not have any printouts.

Student Supplies: Pencils and paper or notebook/journal

Other Materials: Books

1. The *Frog Prince Continued* by Jon Scieszka. One copy per group.

2. *The Frog Prince* by the Grimm Brothers

Recordings

1. *Into the Woods*, Original Cast Recording

2. *Us* by Peter Gabriel
(This lesson uses the song "Kiss That Frog." The teacher should preview the song and the lyrics, and decide whether it is appropriate for the class.)

Other materials:

1. *Into the Woods* lyrics to the "Prologue" or Act One, Scene One

2. Sentence strips or large index cards with the following:

- "I want to go to the ball."
- "Not you. You are too dirty to go to the ball."
- "I want to go to the ball."
- "You shall go! POOF!"
- "I'm beautiful! Thanks!"
- "You're beautiful. Don't go!"
- "I must leave by midnight."
- "Here. Try this on."
- "It fits! I will marry you."

3. Musical instruments such as keyboards, xylophone, recorder, or flute. The instruments may be used to help figure out melodies or to key action in an improv.

4. The student script and sentence strips from Fairy Tale Variations. (Each group should have had these things collected from the last lesson.)

Related Textbooks: None

Teacher Internet Resources:

Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:

- **Learn Improv**
  http://www.learnimprov.com/

  This site focuses on techniques for teaching and learning the art of improvisation. The site includes warm-ups, exercises, games, and other improv activities.

- **Musicals101.com**
  http://www.musicals101.com

  This site explores how musicals are developed and produced. It includes information on various elements of musicals, such as the score, the book, producers, investors, directors, choreographers, and designers.

- **Sondheim.com**

http://www.sondheim.com

This site contains a wealth of information about Stephen Sondheim, including extensive information on his shows, articles, and chat rooms.

General Internet Resources:

- **Grimm Brothers' Home Page**
  http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm.html

  Compiled by D.L. Ashleman, a former University of Pittsburg professor, this site contains alphabetical listings of the Grimm tales. Several tales are linked to other versions of tales around the world.

- **Grimms' Fairy Tales: From Folklore to Forever**
  http://www.nationalgeographic.com/grimm/

  This fanciful interactive site from National Geographic has a choose-your-own-adeventure interface that leads to the full text of 12 Grimms' Fairy Tales.

- **Musicals.net**
  http://musicals.net/

  This site contains information on several musicals, some of which include synopses, links, cast information, and song lists.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- K-4 Music Content Standard 1 : Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- K-4 Music Content Standard 2 : Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- K-4 Music Content Standard 3 : Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
- K-4 Music Content Standard 4 : Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
- K-4 Music Content Standard 6 : Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
- K-4 Music Content Standard 7 : Evaluating music and music performances
- K-4 Music Content Standard 8 : Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 1 : Script writing by planning and recording improvisations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 2 : Acting by assuming roles and

interacting in improvisations

- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 3 : Designing by visualizing and arranging environments for classroom dramatizations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 4 : Directing by planning classroom dramatizations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 5 : Researching by finding information to support classroom dramatizations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 6 : Comparing and connecting art forms by describing theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 7 : Analyzing and explaining personal preferences and constructing meanings from classroom dramatizations and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions
- 5-8 Music Content Standard 1 : Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- 5-8 Music Content Standard 2 : Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
- 5-8 Music Content Standard 3 : Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
- 5-8 Music Content Standard 4 : Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
- 5-8 Music Content Standard 6 : Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
- 5-8 Music Content Standard 7 : Evaluating music and music performances
- 5-8 Music Content Standard 8 : Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 1 : Script writing by the creation of improvisations and scripted scenes based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 2 : Acting by developing basic acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 3 : Designing by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 4 : Directing by organizing rehearsals for improvised and scripted scenes
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 5 : Researching by using cultural and historical information to support improvised and scripted scenes
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 6 : Comparing and incorporating art forms by analyzing methods of presentation and audience response for theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 7 : Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 8 : Understanding context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the community and in other cultures

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

- Language Arts #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8

Source of Standards: McRel, ArtsEdge

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures website.

Instructional Objectives:

1. Students will define the meaning of the words "score," "libretto," and "lyrics."

2. Students will listen to and/or read the Prologue of *Into the Woods*.

3. Students will review the student created nine-line scripts from the lesson, Fairy Tale Variations.

4. Students will use a variety of musical styles to sing the nine-line script of Cinderella.

5. Students, in cooperative groups, will play music improvisation games and create lyrics and music for the Grimm Brothers' tale, *The Frog Prince*.

6. Students, in cooperative groups, will play music improvisation games and create lyrics and music for scenes of *The Frog Prince Continued* by Jon Scieszka.

7. Students, in cooperative groups, will present their scenes to the class.

8. Students, in cooperative groups, will edit and record their improvisations in script and audio/video forms.

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Strategies: Cooperative pairs
Analyzing
Interpreting

Instructional Plan:

DAY ONE

Warm Up

Define these words:

- score: the music and songs of a musical
- lyrics: the words to a song
- libretto: all of the words that are sung in a musical or opera

Introductory Activities

1. Listen to the "Prologue" of *Into the Woods*. Students should have their notebooks and pencils ready to note patterns of words or music.

2. After listening to the recording, students should name the characters and identify each of the characters' wants or desires. The characters are:

a) The Narrator (who wants to tell the story);
b) The Baker (who wants to break the Witch's spell so he can have a child);
c) The Baker's Wife (who wants to help her husband so she can have a child);
d) Jack (who wants to keep Milky White, his cow, even though he must sell her);
e) Jack's Mother (who wants to convince Jack to sell Milky White);
f) Cinderella (who wants to go to the festival)
g) Stepmother (who wants to prevent Cinderella from going to the festival)
h) Florinda and Lucinda, Cinderella's stepsisters (who want to boss Cinderella around);
i) Little Red Riding Hood (who wants to get her goodies to grandmother's house); and
j) Witch (who wants the Baker and his Wife to find four things for her in three days).

3. Have the students reflect for a few minutes. Write these questions on the board.

- How did Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine use music and words to set up their story?
- Were there any patterns, such as repeated words or melodies, that kept the flow of the piece?

- Were the wants of the characters clearly stated in the Prologue?

Discuss observations. Record some on the board.

Developmental/Guided Practice

1. Students listen to Peter Gabriel's song, "Kiss That Frog" off the album *Us*. The lyrics can be viewed on line at Peter Gabriel's Lyrics. (Note: teachers are not advised to send students to this link on their own.) The song lyrics tell the tale of The Frog Prince in a five-minute rock song. What patterns did Gabriel use in music and words to get his story across?

2. Four groups of four (3 girls and 1 boy) student volunteers will be given the opportunity to improvise a musical style, using the nine-line version of Cinderella that was used in the lesson, Fairy Tale Variations. The lines are on sentence strips or large index cards. They are as follows:

b) "Not you, you are too dirty to go to the ball."
c) "I want to go to the ball."
d) "You shall go! POOF!"
e) "I'm beautiful! Thanks!"
f) "You're beautiful! Don't go!"
g) "I must leave by midnight."
h) "Here try this on."
i) "It fits! I will marry you."

3. Give each team a musical style: Opera, Rap, Country, and Rock. Do not give the students time to rehearse. They must simply listen to each other and wing it. Be prepared for lots of laughing and silliness. Encourage students to keep with the style they have been assigned. The class should note any repetition of musical and word patterns. Who listened well and kept within the assigned style?

Independent Practice

1. Divide the class into four groups. (Use the same groups from the Fairy Tale Variations lesson.) The groups will play musical improvisation games. They will need the nine-line scripts they made in Fairy Tale Variations.

2. Each group will use a musical style to tell their nine-line tale. The lines can now be repeated and expanded. Remind the group to make a record in writing (script) of their work.

3. Each group will be given a musical improv to use to create their musical scene:

Group A:

Basing its improv on *The Frog Prince*, this group will play "The Narrated Game." The characters in this scene will be a Narrator, the Frog Prince, the Princess, and the King. During the improvisation, the Frog, Princess, and King sing their parts, using the nine-line script. The Narrator speaks and fills in the missing pieces. This is very similar to the format of the Prologue in *Into the Woods*.

Group B:

Basing its improv on *The Frog Prince Continued*—from the beginning of the story up to the point when the Frog Prince meets Sleeping Beauty's Witch—this group will play an improv game called "Musical Hot Spot." The characters in the play will be the Frog Prince, the Princess, Sleeping Beauty's Witch, and a Musician (with an instrument).

Players begin a straight scene. Any time the musician starts playing, the players must stop normal speaking and break into song. When the musician stops, the players must return to normal speaking. The actors should get as much of their nine-line script in song as they can. (The concept is similar to Musical Chairs.)

Group C:

This group bases its improv on *The Frog Prince Continued*, from the point when the Frog Prince meets Sleeping Beauty's Witch until he meets Cinderella's Fairy Godmother. This group will play an improv game called "Inner Mono Song." The characters will be the Frog Prince, Sleeping Beauty's Witch, Snow White's Witch, Hansel and Gretel's Witch, and Cinderella's Fairy Godmother.

The improv begins with spoken dialogue. At any given point, one of the character sings his/her thoughts. The other characters on stage cannot hear the song. When the character is finished, he/she steps back into the scene and continues with dialogue. These songs can be pieces of the nine-line script. The characters can address the audience during their songs. (Think of the Rogers and Hammerstein musical, *Cinderella*, and the song, "In My Own Little Corner.")

Group D:

This group bases its improv on *The Frog Prince Continued*, from the point when The Frog Prince meets Cinderella's Fairy Godmother to the end of the story. The characters in this excercise will be The Frog Prince, Cinderella's Fairy Godmother, the Princess, and a Narrator.

The characters line up. The Narrator points to a character, and the character sings his/her line in the nine-line script. The characters can be cut off midline, but they must know where they are in the sequence of their tale. (The Narrator functions a bit like a conductor pointing to soloists in an orchestra.) Eventually, the story should be told smoothly.

4. Give the students fifteen minutes to play around with this activity. Assign one person per group to serve as "director." This person makes sure all members are working and keeping on track. Check each group to make sure each person (even the director) has a part. Make sure each character and person know his/her motivation (that is, what he or she wants).

5. Groups present their scenes to the class. Make audio and video recordings of the presentations. Students should note what they like and don't like about these pieces.

6. End Day One here.

(*Note: Students occasionally have difficulty thinking of a tune. Suggest that they use another song's melody, such as television ad jingles, Christmas songs, patriotic songs, or another popular song.)

DAY TWO

1. Begin day two by looking at the video and listening to the tapes of the scenes. Break the class back into groups to discuss what they liked and did not about their scenes. What should be kept of these tunes and words to make a complete telling of two tales, *The Frog Prince* and *The Frog Prince Continued*? Remind students to be diplomatic and to respect each other's work. They all took risks to produce their scene.

2. Students have a half an hour to make adjustments to their scene.

3. Present the new scenes to the class. Write the scenes out in script form and record them on video and audio tapes.

4. Reflect, in journals, on the challenges faced by creating the "score" for this mini-musical. Was is challenging to work with the group? The material? What seemed interesting? Fun? Confusing?

5. Collect the journal entries and scripts.

Assessment: 1. Students identified the meanings of score, lyric, and libretto.

2. Students worked cooperatively with a group.

3. Student groups presented the scene and used the musical improvisation assigned to them. All members of the group had a part.

4. Students created a musical scene and recorded it in script form.

5. Students reflected on the challenges of creating a "score" for a mini-musical.

Extensions: None

Teacher References:

1. Scieszka, Jon and Steve Johnson. *The Frog Prince Continued*. Viking, 1991.
2. Zipes, Jack (trans) and John B. Gruelle (ill.). *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. Bantam Books, 1992.
3. Ranke, Kirk (ed.) and Lotte Baumann (trans). *Folktales of Germany*. Forward by Richard M. Dorson. Chicago; The University of Chicago Press, 1966.
4. Ross, Beverly B. and Jean P. Durgin. *Junior Broadway*. New York; McFarland & Company, 1998.
5. Sondheim, Stephen and James Lapine. *Into the Woods*. New York: Music Theatre International, 1988.
6. Sondheim, Stephen and James Lapine. *Into the Woods Junior*. New York: The Broadway Junior Collection, 1988.
7. Sondheim, Stephen and James Lapine. *Into the Woods: Original Cast Recording*. RCA Victor; 1988.
8. Gabriel, Peter. *Us*. London; Virgin Records, 1992.

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The Kennedy Center ARTSEDGE WORLDCOM

Curricula, Lessons and Activities

Sondheim's Into the Woods: Fairy Tale Variations

Resource Type: lesson

Length: 1 day

Grade: 4,5,6,7,8

Subjects: Language Arts, Performing Arts

Subtopics: Dance, Literature, Music, Theater

Intelligences Being Addressed:

- Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence
- Interpersonal Intelligence
- Intrapersonal Intelligence
- Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence
- Visual/Spatial Intelligence

Dimensions of Learning:

- Acquisition and integration of knowledge
- Attitudes and perceptions about learning
- Extension and refinement of knowledge
- Meaningful use of knowledge
- Productive habits of the mind

Overview: In the musical, *Into the Woods, Jr.*, Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine

have combined several familiar fairy tale characters and their stories. *The Frog Prince* by the Brothers Grimm and Jon Scieszka's fractured tale, *The Frog Prince Continued*, serve as a springboard for the students to create the book for a mini-musical. In groups, the students improvise scenes of *The Frog Prince* and *The Frog Prince Continued* using a variety of improv games. The final product will be presented to the class and recorded in writing. This lesson can be used as a base for building a mini-musical and combined with the lesson, Fairy Tale Tunes.

Equipment:

- Computer : MAC or PC with Internet access and printer

Media & Materials:

Printouts: This lesson does not have any printouts.

Student Supplies: Pencils and paper or notebook/journal

Other Materials:

1. The *Frog Prince Continued* by Jon Scieszka. One copy per group.

2. *The Frog Prince* by the Grimm Brothers.

3. Nine strips of paper or large index cards with one of the following sentences written on each:

- "I want to go to the ball."
- "Not you. You are too dirty to go to the ball."
- "I want to go to the ball."
- "You shall go! POOF!"
- "I'm beautiful! Thanks!"
- "You're beautiful. Don't go!"
- "I must leave by midnight."
- "Here. Try this on."
- "It fits! I will marry you."

4. Strips of paper or large index cards. Give nine to each group. Have reserves ready for mistakes.

5. Markers for each group.

Related Textbooks: None

Teacher Internet Resources:

Lesson and Extension Specific Resources:

- **Geography4Kids: Atmospheres**
  http://www.geography4kids.com/files/atm_atmosphere.html

  This site contains an introduction to the basic composition of the atmosphere, with explanations about how it affects Earth's climate. The site also includes many images and definitions of different types of clouds.

- **Grimm Brothers' Home Page**
  http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm.html

  Compiled by D.L. Ashleman, a former University of Pittsburg professor, this site contains alphabetical listings of the Grimm tales. Several tales are linked to other versions of tales around the world.

- **Musicals.net**
  http://musicals.net/

  This site contains information on several musicals, some of which include synopses, links, cast information, and song lists.

- **Musicals101.com**
  http://www.musicals101.com

  This site explores how musicals are developed and produced. It includes information on various elements of musicals, such as the score, the book, producers, investors, directors, choreographers, and designers.

- **National Weather Service**
  http://weather.gov/

  This site contains a wealth of weather-related information, including educational links and up-to-the-minute maps of weather conditions around the world.

- **Sondheim.com**

http://www.sondheim.com

This site contains a wealth of information about Stephen Sondheim, including extensive information on his shows, articles, and chat rooms.

General Internet Resources:

- **Grimms' Fairy Tales: From Folklore to Forever**
  http://www.nationalgeographic.com/grimm/

  This fanciful interactive site from National Geographic has a choose-your-own-adeventure interface that leads to the full text of 12 Grimms' Fairy Tales.

- **Learn Improv**
  http://www.learnimprov.com/

  This site focuses on techniques for teaching and learning the art of improvisation. The site includes warm-ups, exercises, games, and other improv activities.

- **NOAA Education Page**
  http://www.education.noaa.gov/cweather.html

  This portion of the National Oceanic and Atmosphereic Administration Web site provides links to kid-friendly resources about a variety of weather and storm-related topics.

- **Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute: Weather, Climate and Environmental Change**
  http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1991/6/91.06.01.x.html

  This site provides in-depth information and a unit on global changes on Earth and the evidence for why these changes take place. Some topics included are climate, precipitation, clouds, wind, and dewpoint.

National Standards for Arts Education:

- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 1 : Script writing by planning and recording improvisations based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 2 : Acting by assuming roles and interacting in improvisations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 3 : Designing by visualizing and arranging environments for classroom dramatizations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 4 : Directing by planning classroom dramatizations

- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 5 : Researching by finding information to support classroom dramatizations
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 6 : Comparing and connecting art forms by describing theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms
- K-4 Theatre Content Standard 7 : Analyzing and explaining personal preferences and constructing meanings from classroom dramatizations and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 1 : Script writing by the creation of improvisations and scripted scenes based on personal experience and heritage, imagination, literature, and history
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 2 : Acting by developing basic acting skills to portray characters who interact in improvised and scripted scenes
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 3 : Designing by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 5 : Researching by using cultural and historical information to support improvised and scripted scenes
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 6 : Comparing and incorporating art forms by analyzing methods of presentation and audience response for theatre, dramatic media (such as film, television, and electronic media), and other art forms
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 7 : Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions
- 5-8 Theatre Content Standard 8 : Understanding context by analyzing the role of theatre, film, television, and electronic media in the community and in other cultures

Click here for additional information on the National Standards for Arts Education

Other National Standards:

- Language Arts #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #8

Source of Standards: McRel, ArtsEdge

For more on the Standards in other subjects, please refer to the Mid-continent Regional Education Laboratory (McREL) website.

State Standards, if any:

To search the State Arts Standards, please visit the National Conference of State Legislatures

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website.

Instructional Objectives:

1. Students will retell the Grimm Brothers tale, *The Frog Prince*.
2. Students will identify the characters and their wants in *The Frog Prince*.
3. Students will read *The Frog Prince Continued* by Jon Scieszka.
4. Students will identify the characters and their wants in *The Frog Prince Continued*.
5. Students will compare the stories.
6. Students will define the meaning of the word "book" as used in creating a musical.
7. Students, in cooperative groups, will create improvisations of scenes from *The Frog Prince* and *The Frog Prince Continued*.
8. Students, in cooperative groups, will present their scenes to the class.
9. Students, in cooperative groups, will edit and record their improvisations in script form.

Strategies:

Cooperative pairs
Analyzing
Interpreting
Researching

Instructional Plan:

Warm Up

1. The Brothers Grimm collected tales told by the peasants in Germany in the early 1800's. They were exploring mythology and tales that were meaningful to German-speaking people. The tales were told to explain life, to teach morals, and to entertain. The Grimms listened to the tales and recorded what they heard. They did this in a scholarly and scientific way. They first published these stories in 1812, as "Children and House Stories." (This is a literal translation. The English version is known as "Grimm's Fairy Tales.") While the brothers originally just wrote down the tales as they were told by a tale-teller, they began to combine versions of the tales to create literary stories for the reading public. They worked on these fairy tales throughout their lives.

2. Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine used some of these tales and their characters in their musical, *Into the Woods, Jr.* In the **book**, or **story** of their musical, Sondhiem and Lapine have their characters pursue what they strongly desire or want and send them all into the woods to complete their tasks. They let the characters get in each other's way. By the conclusion of the play, the characters are ready to live "happily ever after."

3. One Grimm's tale Sondhiem and Lapine did not use was *The Frog Prince*.

The class is going to create a "book" for this story as a mini-musical.

4. Discuss the story and identify characters. List the characters on the board. (If students are unfamiliar or unsure of the story read a version out of a book or online at Grimm Brothers Home Page).

5. Identify each character's desire or want in the tale.

- The Frog Prince wants to return to human form.
- The Princess wants her golden ball back and later she wants the Frog Prince to go away.
- The King wants the Princess to keep her promise.

How does each character go about satisfying his or her want? Are the characters successful?

Introductory Activity:

1. Read Jon Scieszka's *The Frog Prince Continued*. Discuss the story and identify characters. List the characters on the board.

2. Identify what the characters want in the tale.

The Frog Prince wants to turn back into a frog and later wants to go home.

- The Princess wants the Frog Prince to start acting like a human not a frog.
- Sleeping Beauty's Witch wants to cast a spell to prevent the Frog Prince from kissing Sleeping Beauty.
- Snow White's Witch wants to poison the Frog Prince to keep him from kissing Snow White.
- Hansel and Gretel's Witch wants to eat the Frog Prince.
- Cinderella's Fairy Godmother wants to help the Frog Prince.

Where do the witches/fairy godmother belong? How do they mess up the story? Was any character successful in getting what he or she wanted?

3. Compare the two stories. Have students draw Venn diagrams. Give them three minutes to answer these questions: Which characters and plot points are alike in the tales? Which are different? Give five examples of each.

4. Students get into groups of four and discuss what they found. Give three minutes. Ask each group for an alike and a difference and put these on the board.

Developmental/Guided Practice

Divide the class into four groups. They will play an improv game, "Dire Consequences." This is a game in which a person goes about his or her daily business, while all around, other players are continually in dire situations. The players that are in dire situations pursue what they want strongly. The people playing the regular person (or people) in each scene should also select a motivation or desire that drives their action in the scene. Their desires are as strong as those of the players in the dire situations, but they are more ordinary, every-day motivations. For example, a player in a dire situation might be trying to escape from a burning building, while a "regular person" might simply want to go to the bathroom, to get home in time to watch a favorite television show, to eat dinner, or to meet a friend at the movies, etc. (It is acceptable for more than one player to pursue the same desire.)

- Group A—Basing its improv on *The Frog Prince*, some members of the group use The Frog Prince, The Princess, and The King to play out their wants as "dire situations," (see Warm Up activity), while the "regular person or people" play out typical activities of a student's daily life.
- Group B—This group bases its improv on *The Frog Prince Continued* from the beginning story until The Frog Prince meets Sleeping Beauty's Witch. Students should use The Frog Prince, The Princess, and Sleeping Beauty's Witch to play out their wants as "dire situations" (see Introductory Activity) , while the "regular person or people" play out typical activities of a student's daily life.
- Group C—This group bases its improv on *The Frog Prince Continued* from when The Frog Prince meets Sleeping Beauty's Witch until he meets Cinderella's Fairy Godmother. Use The Frog Prince, Sleeping Beauty's Witch, Snow White's Witch, Hansel and Gretel's Witch, and Cinderella's Fairy Godmother to play out their wants as "dire situations" (see Introductory Activity), while the "regular person or people" play out typical activities of a student's daily life.
- Group D—Basing its improv on *The Frog Prince Continued* from when The Frog Prince meets Cinderella's Fairy Godmother to the end of the story, this group uses The Frog Prince, Cinderella's Fairy Godmother, and The Princess to play out their wants as "dire situations" (see Introductory Activity), while the "regular person or people" play out typical activities of a student's daily life.

Give the students ten minutes to play around with this. Assign one person per group to serve as "director." This person makes sure all members are working and keeping on track. Check each group to make sure each person (even the director) has a part. Make sure each character and person knows his/her want. More than one person per group can be a "regular person." The regular person may or may not help each character achieve their goal. The characters

can help the regular person get what they want.

3. Groups present their scenes to the class.

Independent Practice

1. The students now go back to their group with a new assignment. Tell them to improvise again, but this time, they may only speak nine lines.

Use the story of Cinderella as an example. What would be an important line for each of the characters to say? (Show the students the nine example sentences written on paper strips or index cards.)

- What would Cinderella say? Perhaps, "I want to go to the ball." (Show the students the strip or card containing the text.)
- The stepmother might say, "Not you, you are too dirty to go to the ball."
- Cinderella might say to her stepmother, "I want to go to the ball."
- The Fairy Godmother might say, "You shall go! POOF!"
- Cinderella might say, "I'm beautiful! Thanks!"
- The Prince can say, "You're beautiful. Don't go!"
- Cinderella could say, "I must leave by midnight."
- The Prince might say, "Here. Try this on."
- Cinderella could say, "It fits! I will marry you."

2. The students must decide as a group what the nine important lines are in their story that conveys the wants of the characters and moves the scene along. This time there is no regular person in the scene. Only the wants of the fairy tale or fractured fairy tale characters are driving the scene. Lines can be repeated, but are counted again. (Note the example above, in which Cinderella repeats, "I want to go to the ball.")

3. Once the lines have been decided, write them on sentence strips. Give them ten to fifteen minutes to create the improv. Only the nine lines that they have selected may be used in the scene.

Closure:

1. Present the nine-line scenes to the class.

2. Students write their nine-line scene in a script form. All group members should copy the group's scene.

3. Discuss if there were any different choices in the overlapping scenes.

4. Reflect, in journals, on the challenges faced by creating the "book" for this mini-musical. Was it challenging to work with the group? The material? What

seemed interesting? Fun? Confusing?

5. The teacher collects the Venn diagrams, sentence strips, scripts, and the journal entry.

Assessment:

1. Students compared *The Frog Prince* and *The Frog Prince Continued.* Five examples of same and different characters or plot were given.
2. Students worked cooperatively with a group.
3. Student groups presented the scene assigned to them. All members of the group had a part.
4. Students created a nine-line scene, presented it, and recorded it in script form.
5. Students reflected on the challenges of creating a "book" for a mini-musical.

Extensions:

1. Jon Scieszka also wrote another version of *The Frog Prince* in his collection of short fracture fairy tales called *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*. Look for the tale entitled "The Other Frog Prince." This could be included in the group break-outs as a fifth group. Only The Frog Prince and The Princess appear in this story. The Frog Prince just wants a kiss. The Princess wants to help the poor little frog. Slime happens.

2. *The Frog Principal* by Stephanie Calmenson takes the idea of "Dire Consequences" and creates a story around it. The principal, Mr. Bundy, is turned into a frog. He even chases after a ball and retrieves it for some kids. Then he returns to school in frog form to carry out his principal duties.

Teacher References:

1. Scieszka, Jon and Steve Johnson. *The Frog Prince Continued*. Viking, 1991.
2. Zipes, Jack (trans) and John B. Gruelle (ill.). *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. Bantam Books, 1992.
3. Ranke, Kirk (ed.) and Lotte Baumann (trans). *Folktales of Germany*. Forward by Richard M. Dorson. Chicago; The University of Chicago Press, 1966.
4. Scieszka, Jon and Lane Smith. *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*. Viking, 1992.
5. Calmenson, Stephanie and Denise Brunkus. *The Frog Principal*. Scholastic Trade, 2001.
6. Sondheim, Stephen and James Lapine. *Into the Woods*. New York: Music Theatre International, 1988.
7. Sondheim, Stephen and James Lapine. *Into the Woods Junior*. New York: The Broadway Junior Collection, 1988.

8. Sondheim, Stephen and James Lapine. *Into the Woods: Original Cast Recording*. RCA Victor; 1988.

"Dire Consequences" and "Nine Line" were adapted from games found on "The Living Playbook," an Internet resource that is no longer online. Other improvisation Web sites are referenced in Teacher Internet Resources.

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